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List 11

JIM
DINE

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Someone Says: IT REALLY LOOKS LIKE IT

Three Studies For A Child's Room

1. Is the imprint of a child's hand on a canvas a "fact" or an "object"? Is it an "event"? Is it a "popular" or "vulgar" way of painting?

Toaster

If there is a gap between life and that part of life called art there may be a point in making a painting of a sunset by starting from a sunset rather than from paintings of sunsets, as Malraux supposes a painter to do. In that case the painter might even cut a hole in the canvas to incorporate the sunset. This would, in principle, be the standpoint of Jim Dine. In a toaster-painting a toaster can be used and the painting will appear partly toasted, partly burned.

He would, nevertheless, not fool himself by believing that the toaster he used still is "life". In his painting "Lawn-mower" Dine lets the painting (by its proportion and position) mow rather than the person. Art pushes life. But life also pushes; the only place where the canvas is painted is in the area where (the handle of) the lawn-mower touches the canvas. And the lawn-mower has no traces of grass, it has smear-traces of green paint. Art mows art. At most, Dine's work may shorten the distance to that improbable point where one may as well say, "art and that part of art called life", where there will be no parts, only a whole—a point where civilization, in Freudian terms, would not tend to stimulate and materialize the death-instinct but to enforce life as pleasure. This seems to mean that society would not increase recreation without having anything, including art, to fill it with, but that society would make both work and recreation a pleasure through morals, drugs or genetics. In the meantime the artist continues to act in the gap between life and art, double-dealing, as he has always done, between life as pleasure and life as adaptation to society. This double-dealing has in the last years been brought to a critical point by the New York artists who introduce elements from life and society into their works.

This does not mean that Dine wants to tell us something about society or say something for or against it, even though he, in his latest work, has focused on that primeval unit of society, the family. Just as in his previous works much of his material consists of objects seen as "extensions and projections of ourselves" (J. W. Kluver), here the room-elements project *the home*.

In the home of Dine's paintings there is little stress laid on beds, stoves and pots and pans. For living and eating there is one room or suite of rooms. For children's play there are four rooms. For

cleanliness there are three showers and five bathrooms.

Flesh Bathroom

Black Bathroom no. 2

2. The equivalence in a painting of all materials and of all ways of representation can be emphasized by tautology. No contradiction can exist between electric light and painted light-beams. Which is most real—the immaterial light from the lamp or the representation of light in exquisite smear-palpability of paint?

Dine often writes on the painting the name of an object represented or present beyond doubt in the painting. Does the impact of this tautology reside in the demonstration of the obvious (as it has been said about Dine's work)? Or does the redundancy rather stress the subjective convention of our concepts, the absurb frailty of the tie between word and object—the impossibility of reaching any object, be it light or paint, be it in "life" or in "art"?

Black Bathroom no. 2

3. Poetry will arise neither from overstatement nor from understatement but from superstatement.

This concentration of statement has also been achieved by Jasper Johns. In his first well-known works he imprisons the paint-statement within the outlines of the fact; the flag is a painting and vice versa and so on.

Dine separates, stating paint in one place and fact in another, emphasizing how interchangeable these concepts are. Unlike Rauschenberg, who separates but tends to neutralize all statements through a pattern of relationships and thus achieves a state of total weightlessness of his elements, Dine often compresses the weight of his statement into one massive tautology. In the case of his home-paintings the statement may even be tripled. The room-paintings will hang in a room in the owner's home.

Four Rooms

Black Bathroom no. 2

4. Concentration implies limitation and this is apparent in many respects. Although one of the pioneers of happenings, Dine does not intend the spectator to participate in his work by manipulating objects etc. His tools are frozen to immobility, firmly glued and screwed to the canvas. The esthetic experience of "Four Rooms" (with armchair) involves only looking, not sitting. His room-paintings are not intended to constitute an "environment"; they are separate and self-sufficient.

Furniture, protruding tools etc., do not make up elements of sculpture. Dine occasionally tries to make a sculpture, for example by painting directly on furniture, but he usually ends up by leaving the piece or by fastening it to a canvas. Like a Western gunman Dine prefers to meet the threat of the spectator's eye with his rear covered. His unflat paintings, with pleasant paradox, are flattened cubes, (rooms); the washbasin against a patch of black paint be-

Photo: Hans Namuth

JIM DINE, 1962

comes a *drawing*, the white of the porcelain acting as a part of the "paper".

Shower no. 1

Green Shower

Double Red Bathroom

Toaster

5. Limitations occur within the paintings and form situations involving limits. The various areas correspond to concepts and as one area is followed by another, different consequences arrive for the other elements in the work. Similarly if I go from a child's room to a bathroom, I will be changed by the different situation. In the paintings the influence can always be directed both ways. A different concept or situation will change the toaster or vice versa. The green shower will change into a lamp. This is not a surrealist metamorphosis. Within the unity of the image each element retains its identity and material quality; only the notion of distributing water has been switched over to that of distributing light by a stroke of clean, meaningless madness (reminiscent of the mad connections in "Wiring . . ."). There is also unity in time; the paintings are not extended into phases of action (if light can be turned on, it is always turned on).

One might be reminded of Duchamp's door that can be open and shut at the same time. But Dine's paradoxical unity seems to be a means, not an end. He is not witty. He invents; he does not ironize. Dine, too, a year ago, made a door-piece. It consists of three doors, heavily painted in black, lying with slight displacement, one on top of the other, closing each other, opening to nothing. Neither does Dine criticize—the kind of bathroom fixture, by means of which Duchamp made a sensation in 1917, is only hinted at by the paper-roll in Dine's bathroom-paintings.

Flesh Bathroom

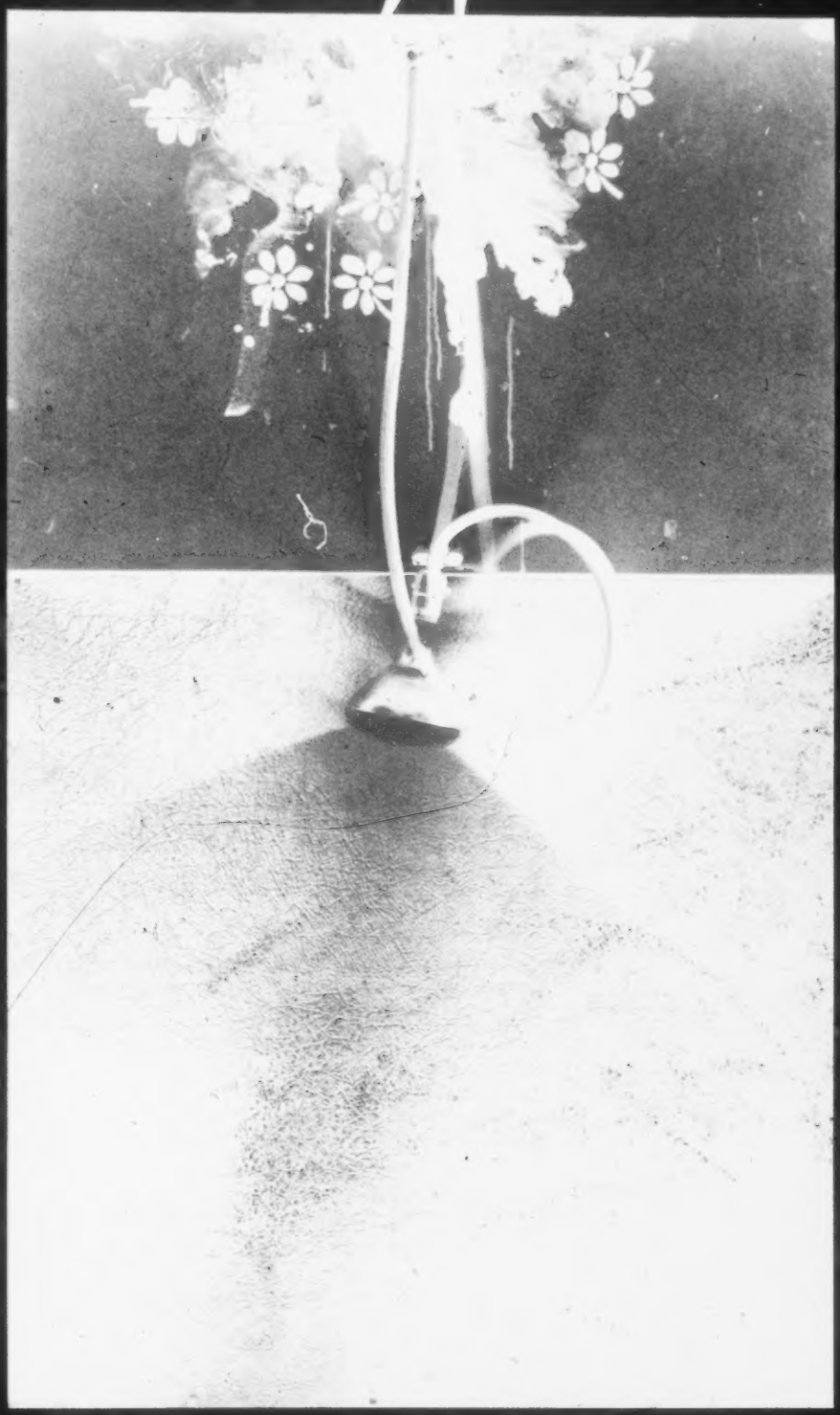
6. Poetry will arise from monumental directness and clarity—so monumental that the obvious becomes doubtful, "impossible". Yet it is there. A toothbrush given the impact of an Egyptian pyramid will make us doubt both. The monumentality still does not mean overstatement; it isn't achieved by making the toothbrush extra big or extra stylized, but by presenting/representing it extra toothbrushy (both in substance and in meaning).

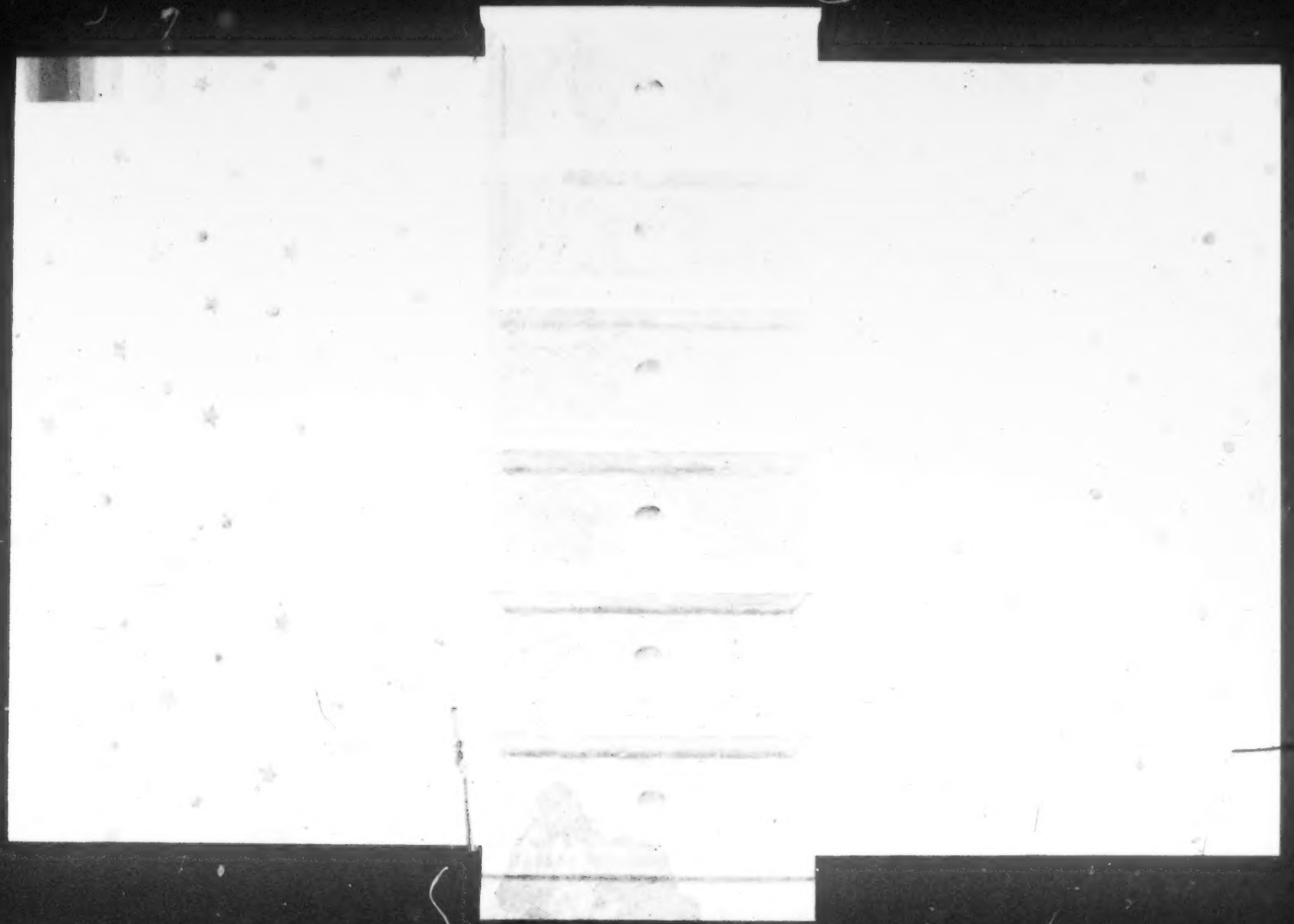
Flesh-tie

Three Studies For A Child's Room

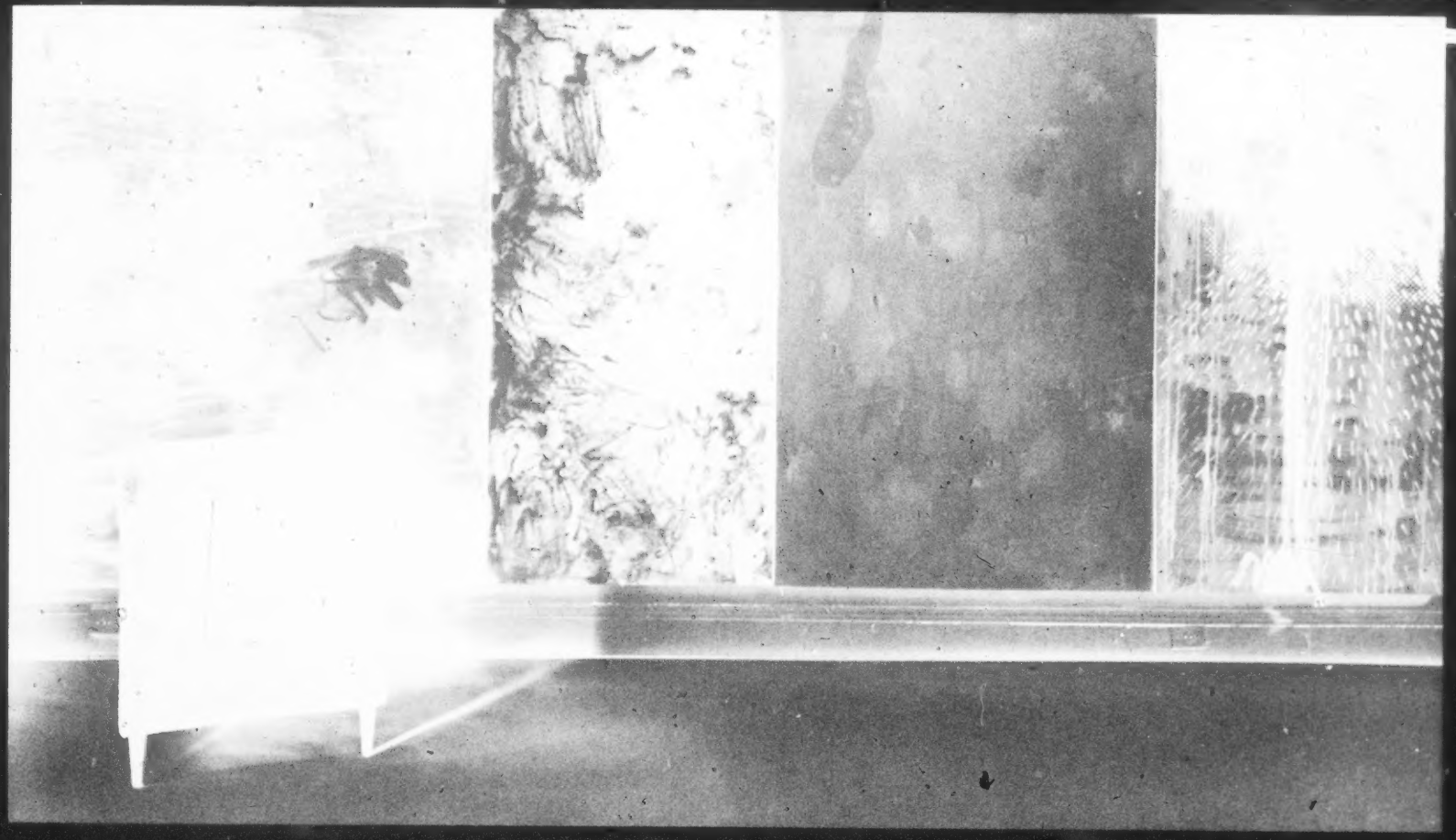
7. Dine makes "flesh-ties" and "flesh bathrooms". By incorporating objects into our lives we leave our traces on them. By leaving smear-traces on objects Dine incorporates them into his art. The traces are the signs of possession, of unity. The trace also stands for the object and thus again is separate from the object. By imprinting one of his children's hands against the canvas (in "Three Studies For A Child's Room") Dine links to the first painting act, the cave-man's supposed discovery of representation, of painting as an act of exteriorization. Dine's acts are discoveries of incorporation. Both reveal the primeval thrill of seeing sameness in non-identity.

OYVIND FAHLSTROM

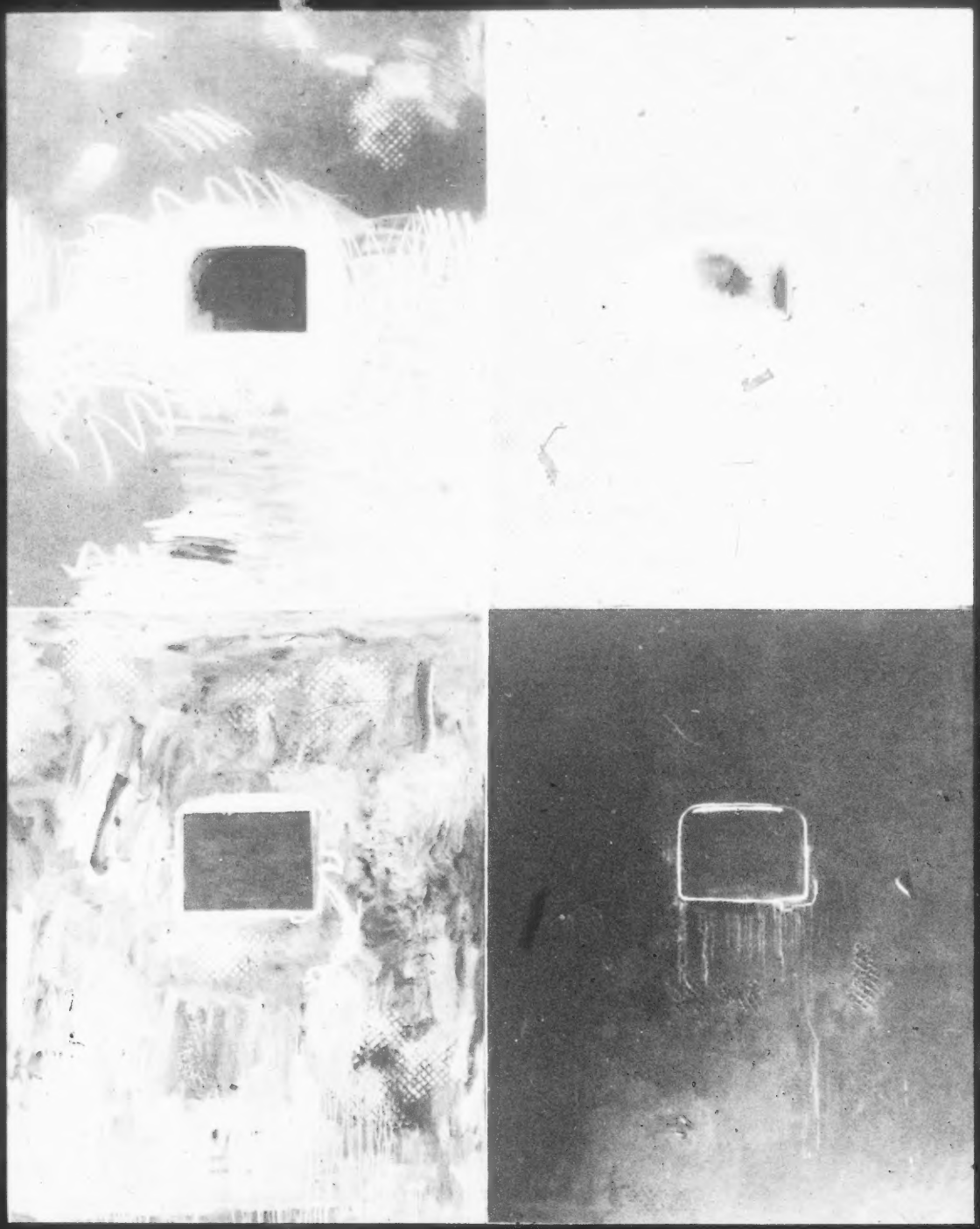


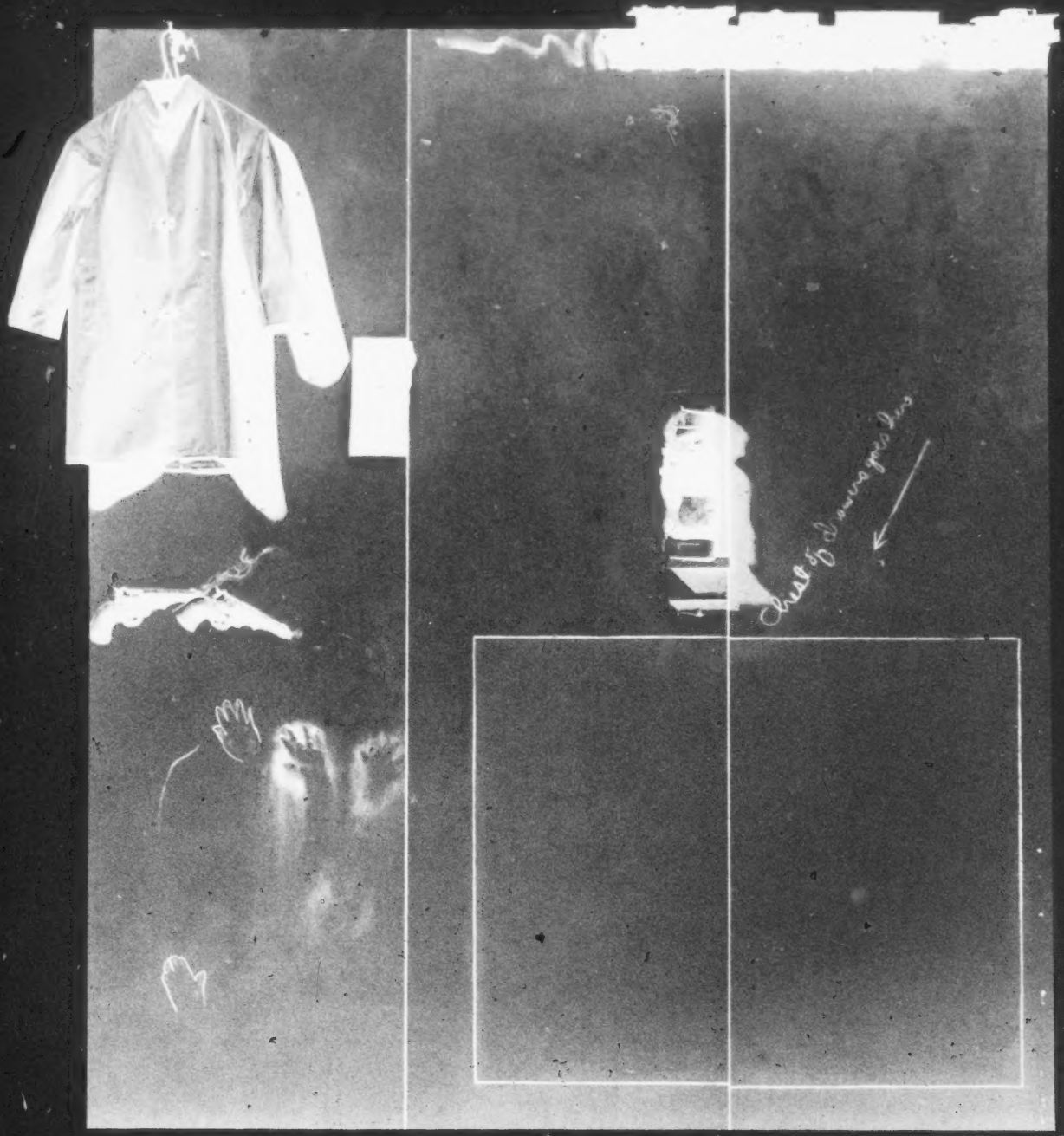


2 Black Child's Room 1962



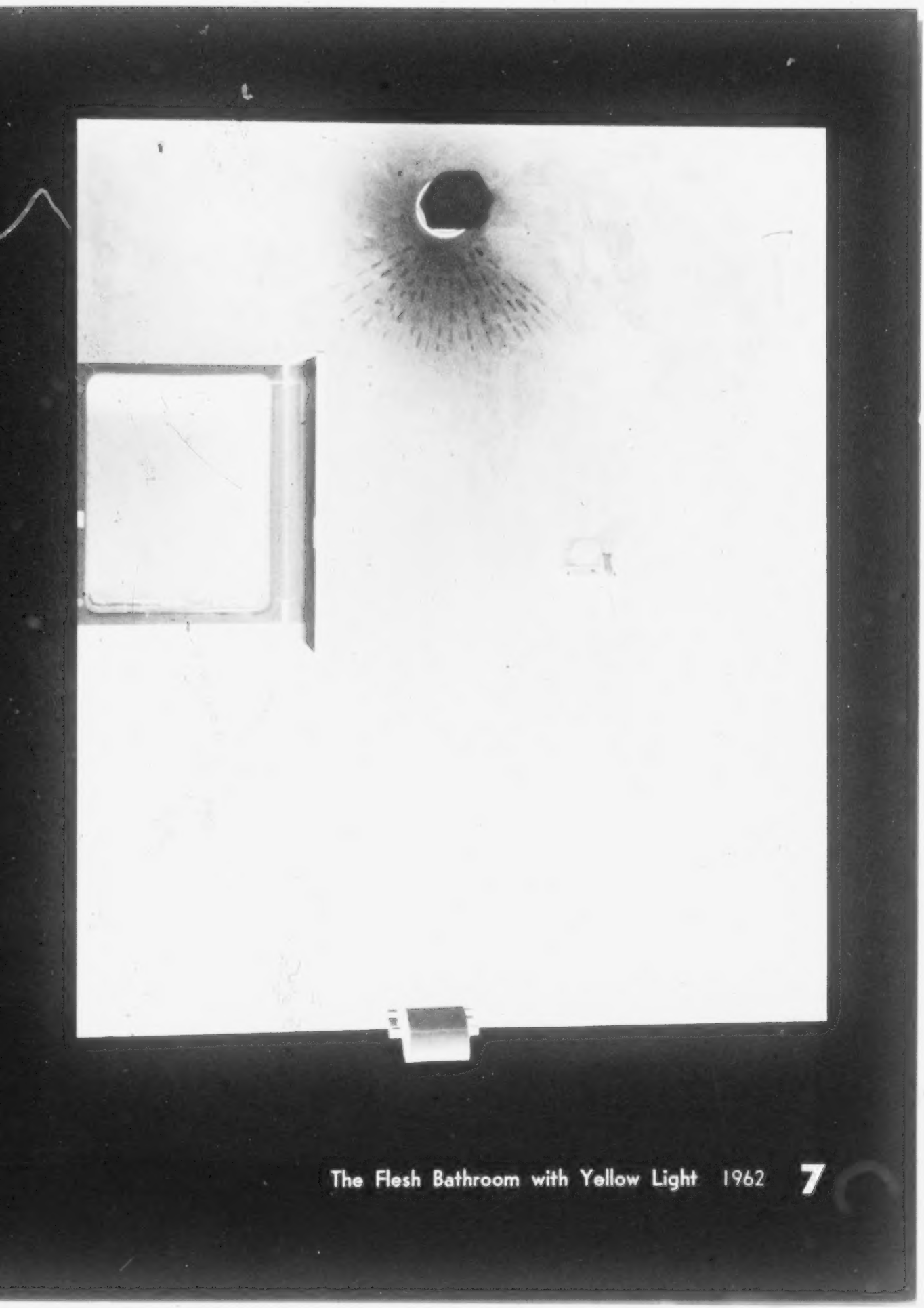
3 Four Rooms 1962



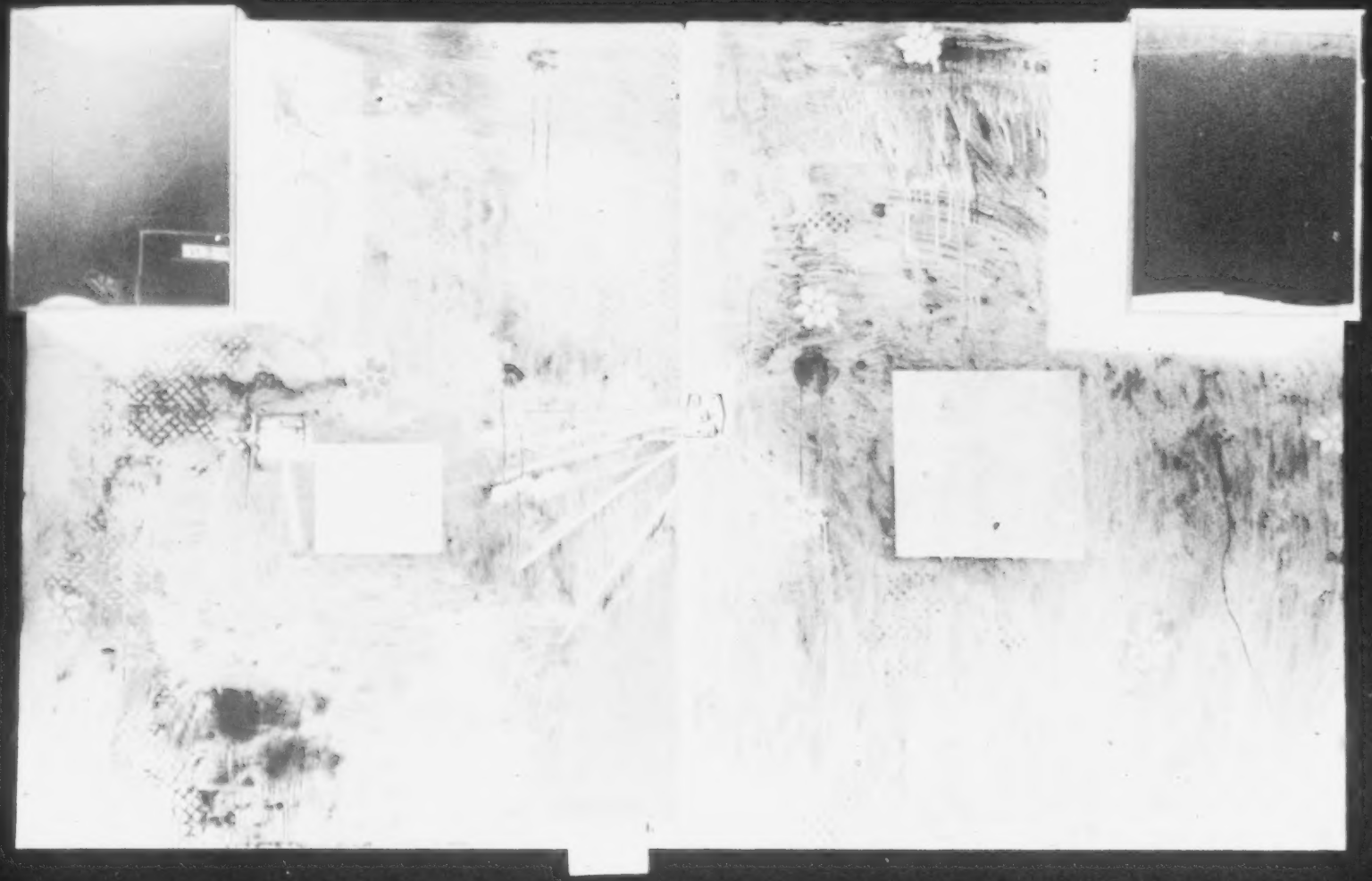


Three Panel Study For Child's Room 1962 **5**

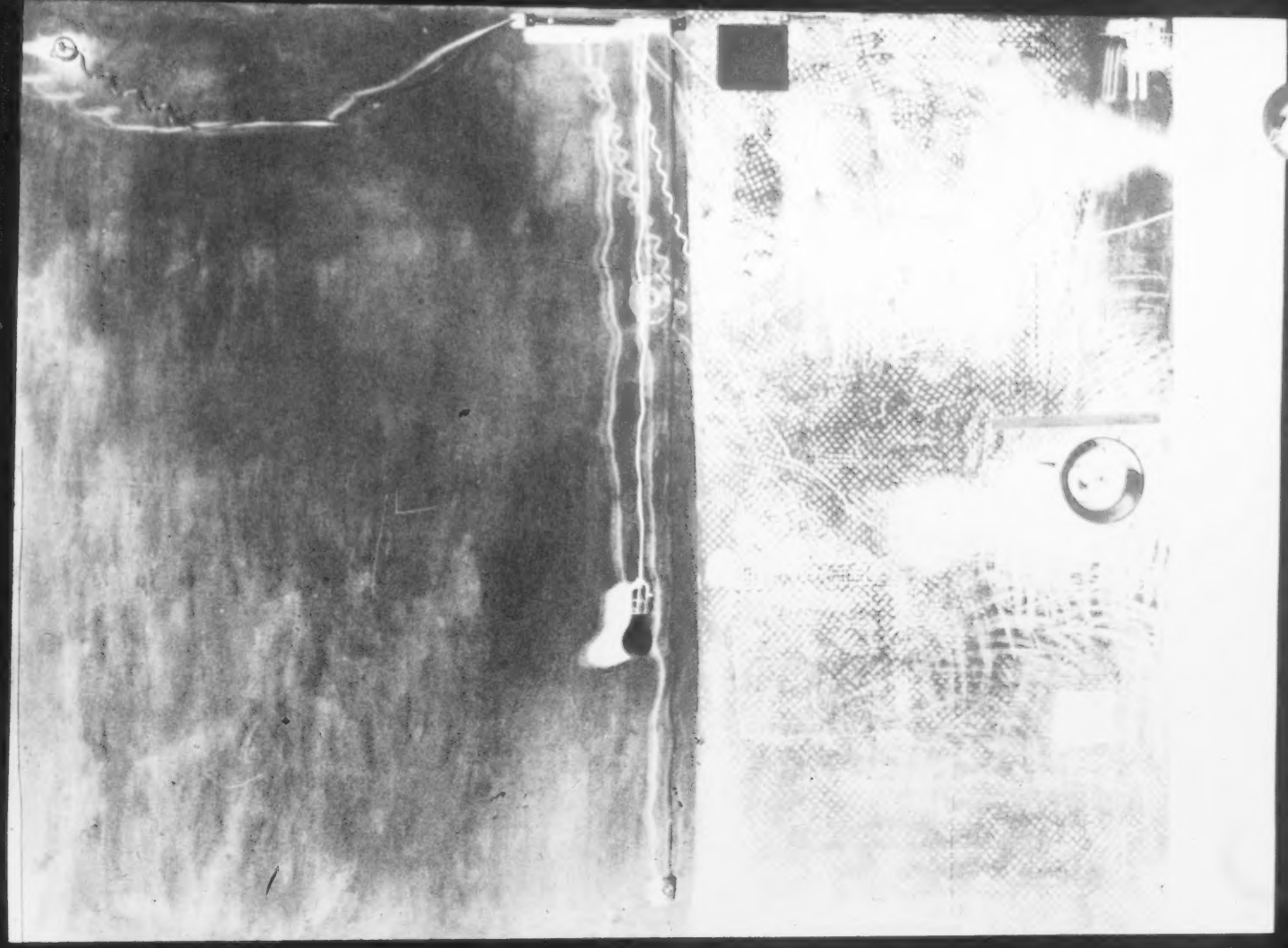
6 Two Panel Black Bathroom 1962



The Flesh Bathroom with Yellow Light 1962 7



8 Double Red Bathroom 1962



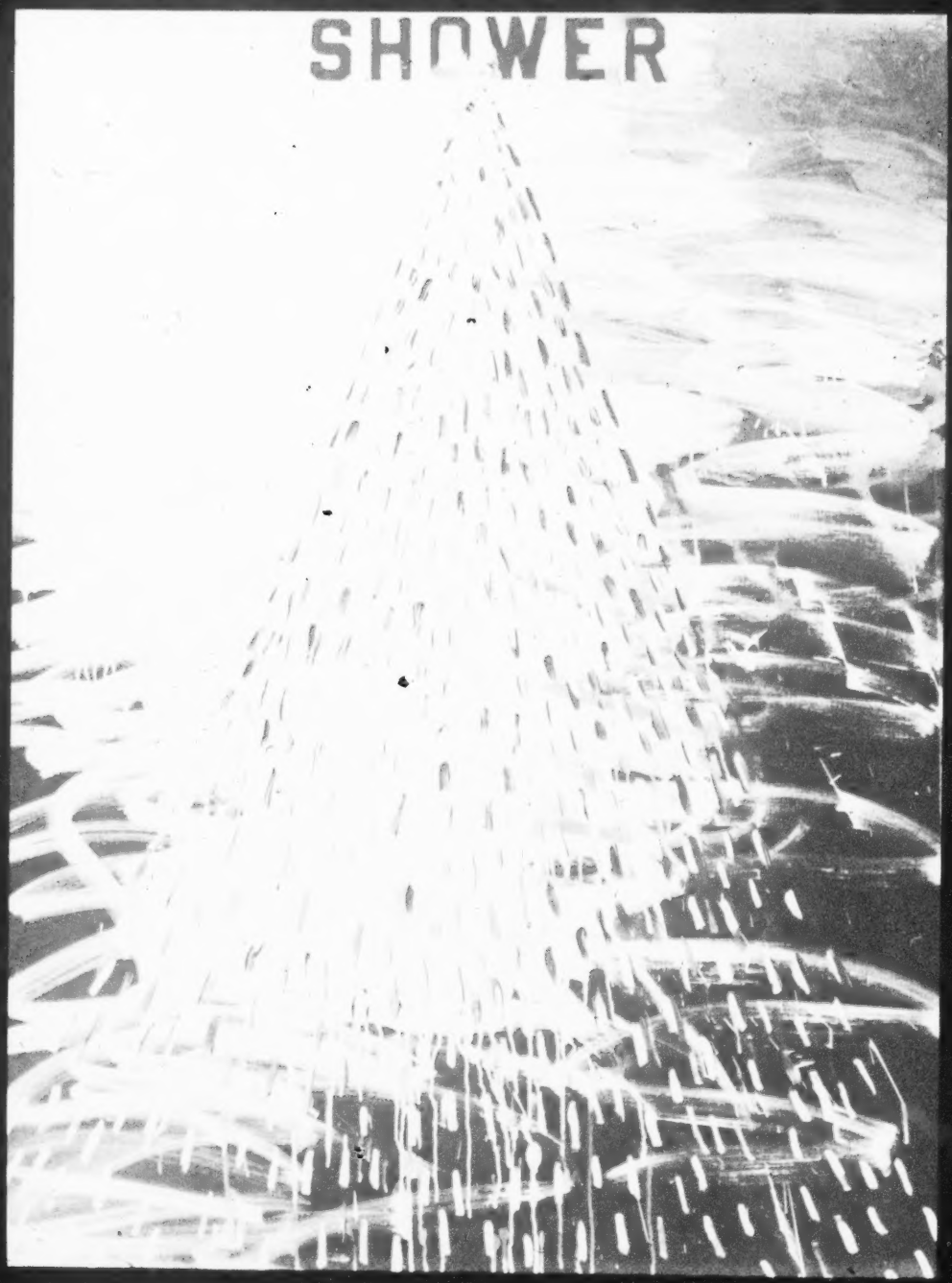
9 Wiring The Unfinished Bathroom 1962

10 Still Life Painting 1962

Child's Blue Wall 1962 **11**

12 Black Bathroom No. 2 1962

RAINBOW



14 Small Shower 1962

Catalogue

Oil

1 **Green Shower** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Rubber, Metal and Light Bulb 60 x 36"

2 **Black Child's Room** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Wood, Metal and Wire 48 x 78 x 17½"
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Albert A. List

3 **Four Rooms** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Metal, Rubber and Upholstered Chair 72 x 180"

4 **Toaster** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Metal and Wire 100 x 80"
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Albert A. List

5 **Three Panel Study For Child's Room** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Metal, Plastic and Cloth 84 x 72"

6 **Two Panel Black Bathroom** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Glass and Metal 72 x 72"

7 **The Flesh Bathroom with Yellow Light** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Mirror, Metal, Paper and Light Bulb 72 x 60"
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Vadim Phillippe Kondratief

8 **Double Red Bathroom** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Glass, Metal, Paper and Toothbrush 50 x 80"
Collection: Rose Art Museum, Gevirtz Purchase Fund, Brandeis University

9 **Wiring The Unfinished Bathroom** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Wire, Metal, Light Bulb and Toothbrush 70 x 96"

10 **Still Life Painting** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Metal and Plastic 36 x 24"

11 **Child's Blue Wall** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Wood, Metal, Light Bulb 60 x 72"

12 **Black Bathroom No. 2** 1962
Oil and Drawing on Canvas, Porcelain and Metal 72 x 72"

13 **Rainbow** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Rubber and Metal 72 x 72"

14 **Small Shower** 1962
Oil on Canvas with Metal 48 x 36"
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Morton G. Neumann

15 **Child's Rainbow Closet** 1962
Oil on Canvas, Wood, Metal, Comb and Brush 72 x 48"

16 **Red Light Bulb** 1962
Oil on Canvas and Light Bulb 36 x 24"

Collage

17 **Rainbow Toothbrush and Tumblers** 1962
Collage 20 x 30"
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Richard M. Polsky

18 **One White Toothbrush** 1962
Collage 20 x 30"

19 **One Black Toothbrush** 1962
Collage 20 x 30"
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Richard M. Polsky

20 **One Orange Toothbrush** 1962
Collage 20 x 30"

21 **Shower #5** 1962
Collage 37 x 22½"

22 **Shower #2** 1962
Collage 37 x 22½"

23 **Four Chairs #1** 1962
Collage 18 x 23½"

24 **Four Chairs #6** 1962
Collage and drawing 18 x 23½"

25 **Four Chairs #7** 1962
Collage and drawing 18 x 23½"

26 **Toothbrush and Tumbler with Metal Screws** 1962
Collage 29 x 22½"

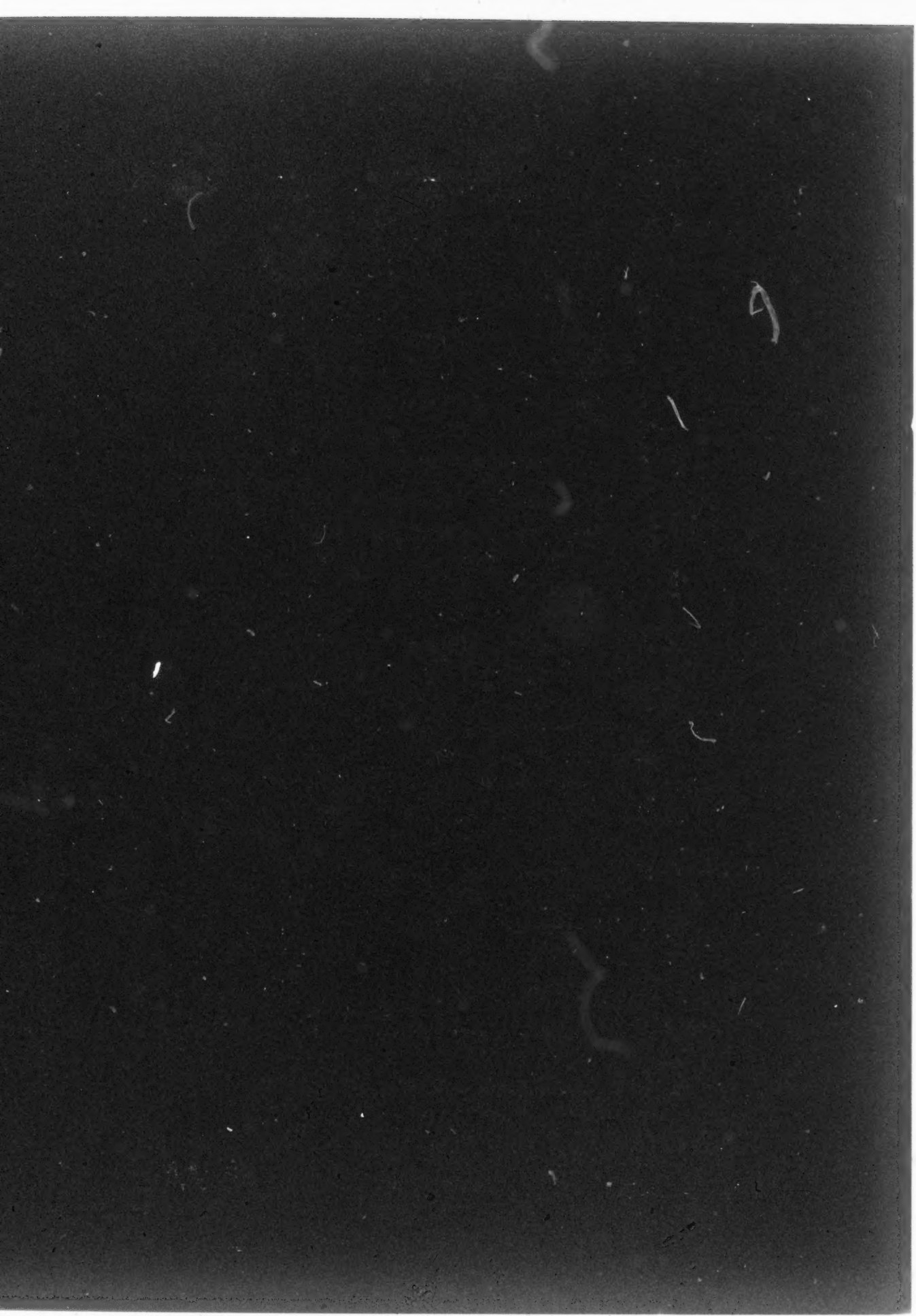
27 **Toothbrush and Tumbler with Metal Screw** 1962
Collage 29 x 22½"

Watercolor

28 **Toothbrush and Tumbler Holder and Rainbow #5** 1962
Watercolor and Drawing 29 x 22½"

29 **Toothbrush and Tumbler Holder #9** 1962
Watercolor and Drawing 29 x 22½"

30 **Study For Child's Blue Wall** 1962
Watercolor 22½ x 29"
Collection: The Woodward Foundation



Exhibition: New Paintings by

JIM DINE

February 4 - March 2, 1963

Sidney Janis 15 east 57 N Y